

# School Libraries Count!

*The **Second** National Survey of  
School Library Media Programs*

**2008**

Chicago  
American Association of School Librarians

2008

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# Introduction

In 2007, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) initiated an annual survey of school library media programs. The development of this longitudinal survey project was mandated by the AASL Board and advocated by the division's Research and Statistics Committee and Independent Schools Section. The survey was promoted via a wide variety of venues, including: AASL events at recent ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences, AASL e-mail lists, AASL chapters and affiliates, telephone calls and e-mails by selected interested parties, and e-mails by the survey contractor.

The launch of the second year of the survey coincided with ALA's 2008 Midwinter Meetings in Philadelphia. Almost 7,000 responses to the 2008 survey were received.

This report summarizes the overall results, the results by school level and enrollment, and more detailed results, when statistically significant relationships between the results and selected other factors were found. These other factors include: region, a school's poverty status, locale (metropolitan versus non-metropolitan), and whether a school is public or private. While the data on the latter characteristic was based on respondents' reports, data on poverty status and locale were obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, which is also the source of the public school universe file for this project. (As a result, these two data elements were available for more than 6,000 of the almost 7,000 respondents for 2008.) Other factors did not yield sufficient numbers of cases to look more closely at specific types of schools (e.g., charter, special education, vocational-technical, alternative, magnet).

Respondents to the AASL survey were self-selected. For this reason, it is not possible to generate national totals. Instead, for each statistic, this report presents three percentiles: the 50<sup>th</sup>, the 75<sup>th</sup>, and the 95<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of reporting these three figures is to describe the better half of responding school libraries. The 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, or median, is the figure that divides the respondents in half—half reported this figure or above, half a lower figure. The 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is the figure below which three-quarters of the respondents fall and one-quarter above. Finally, the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile is the figure at or above which only five percent of the respondents fall.

To find this and related documents and the latest information about the survey, visit the AASL website at <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/slcsurvey.cfm>, or the survey website at <http://www.aaslsurvey.org>.

To ask questions, make suggestions or comments, or volunteer to assist in promoting the 2009 survey, contact Allison Cline, AASL Deputy Director, [acline@ala.org](mailto:acline@ala.org).

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# **Part I. All Schools Results**

The results of analyses of the 6,998 responses received from all schools for the 2008 School Libraries Count survey are presented in Part I.

The first two sets of questions for which data are reported concern library media program staffing. The first set of questions identifies staffing levels—specifically, the number of weekly hours worked by school library media specialists (SLMSs--i.e., teacher-librarians) and by all program staff. The second set of questions determines weekly hours spent on key activities, including planning with teachers, delivering instruction, and overseeing budgets.

The following set of questions address two types of school library media center (SLMC) hours: the total weekly hours the SLMC is open and the number of those hours available for flexible scheduling. The first type of hours indicates the amount of access to the SLMC in the most basic sense, while the second type reveals how available the SLMC is to teachers and students on the basis of curricular needs rather than an arbitrary fixed schedule.

The next four sets of questions elicit a description of the information resources available via the library media program. The first two sets ask about the size of the SLMC's book and periodical programs and the average copyright year for a key segment of the collection—works on health and medicine. The remaining two sets of questions about information resources concern computer and database access. The first of these two sets of questions asks the number of computers available in the SLMC as well as the number of computers elsewhere in the school that are networked to library media resources. The final question in this section concerns whether or not teachers and students can access online databases from remote locations—particularly home.

A subsequent pair of questions asks for the number of individual and group visits to the SLMC. In addition to hours available for flexible scheduling, individual visits are another indicator of how accessible at points of need the SLMC is to students in particular. While group visits may happen on a fixed schedule, they are likely to be more numerous for schools that provide more open access to their SLMCs. In the latter case, group visits are not limited to full class visits, and may include visits by smaller groups of students working together on collaborative assignments.

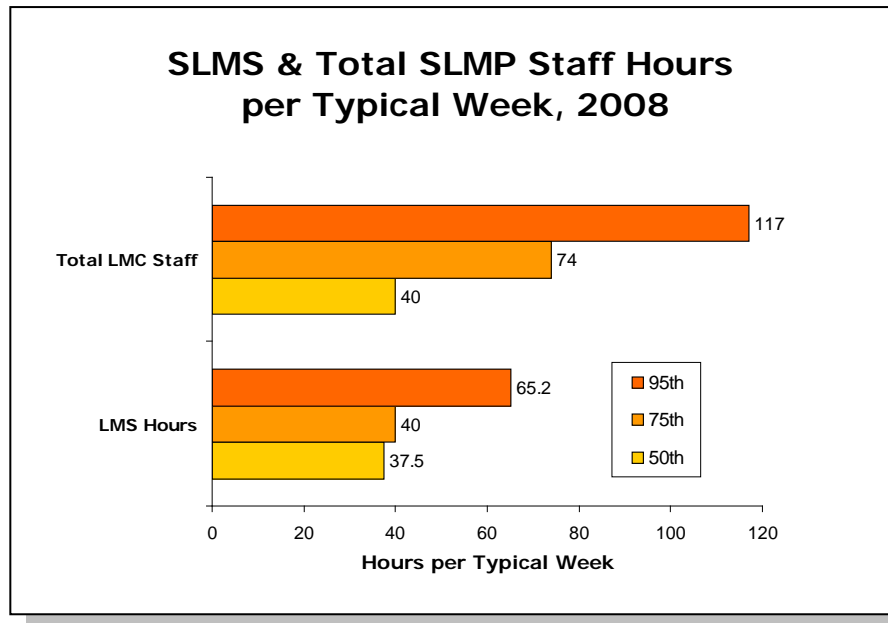
The last of the core survey questions regards expenditures for the library media program.

Finally, this year—for the first time—the survey closed with a set of topical questions about library media program support of instructional uses of social networking tools.

## School Library Media Specialists & Total SLMP Staff

How much can be achieved by a school library media program depends largely on the level at which it is staffed—its total staffing level, and especially the extent of the presence of a school library media specialist (SLMS).

Half of responding SLMPs (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) have almost one full-time equivalent (FTE) SLMS—37.5 hours per typical week—and total SLMP staff hours reflecting full-time coverage—40 hours per week.



These figures suggest that, while a full-time SLMS is present about half the time, they typically have only two and a half hours a week of staff support, making that the only time they are free to meet with their principals, attend faculty or committee meetings, deliver in-service professional development opportunities to teachers, or work with teachers and students in their classrooms.

The top quarter of responding SLMPs have a full-time library media specialist—40 hours per typical week—and almost two FTEs of total staff—74 hours per week. The fact that these schools provide nearly full-time support to their SLMSs enables them to pursue activities such as those listed above—activities that research has linked to higher scores on reading, writing, and other achievement tests.

The top five percent of responding SLMPs have more than one full-time SLMS—65.2 hours per typical week—and almost three FTEs of total staff—117 hours per typical week. With access to more than one SLMS, teachers in these schools are more likely to enjoy the benefits of collaboration with a SLMS on the design and delivery of instruction.

Several factors affect the levels of SLMP staffing in participating schools:

### School Level

The top five percent of high school SLMPs report two full-time school library media specialists. The top five percent of elementary and middle schools report only one SLMS. While half of elementary and middle schools report only one FTE of total library staffing, half of high schools report a little over one and a half. Among the top five percent at each grade level, the high school advantage in total SLMP staffing is even more dramatic—149 hours per week versus 80 and 99 hours per week, respectively, for elementary and middle schools.

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### **Enrollment**

The top five percent of schools with enrollments of 1,000 or higher reported two or more SLMS FTEs, and the top quarter of those with enrollments of 2,000 or higher reported almost two SLMS FTEs. For schools with enrollments between 300 and 1,000, the top half of responding schools reported one or about one SLMS FTE. For schools with enrollments under 300, half report less than a half-time SLMS—16 hours per week. Half of schools with enrollments of 1,000 and over report two or almost two total SLMP FTEs, while the top five percent report almost four to more than five total SLMP FTEs.

### **Region<sup>1</sup>**

SLMP staffing is lower in the West than in other regions. On average, responding SLMPs from Western states report 23.7 hours per week of SLMS staffing and total SLMP staff of 49.7 hours per week. In other regions, SLMS staffing averages 28.3 (Northeast) to 32.7 (South) hours per week, and total SLMP staffing averages 56.2 (Northeast) to 56.8 (South) hours per week.

### **High Poverty Schools**

SLMPs at schools serving more poor students (31.4% or more eligible for the National School Lunch Program) average fewer hours of library media specialist and total library staffing. Schools with fewer poor students have an SLMS present 31.7 hours per week, on average, compared to 28.1 hours per week for schools with more poor students. There is a similar gap for total staffing—58.4 and 47.9 hours per week, respectively.

### **Metropolitan Schools**

SLMPs at schools in the central cities and suburbs of metropolitan areas average 30.7 hours per week of SLMS staffing and 54.3 hours of total SLMP staffing, compared with 28.2 and 50.8 hours, respectively, for schools in outlying towns and rural areas. These differences are small but statistically significant.

### **Public and Private Schools**

On average, public school SLMPs report 30 hours per week of SLMS staffing, compared to only 21.9 hours per week for private schools. But, private schools tend to have more total SLMP staffing. The average private school reported 68.2 hours of total SLMP staff, compared to only 53.3 hours for public schools.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census regions were used. The Northeast includes: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT. The Midwest includes: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, and WI. The South includes: AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV. The West includes: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, and WY.

## Selected Activities of School Library Media Specialists

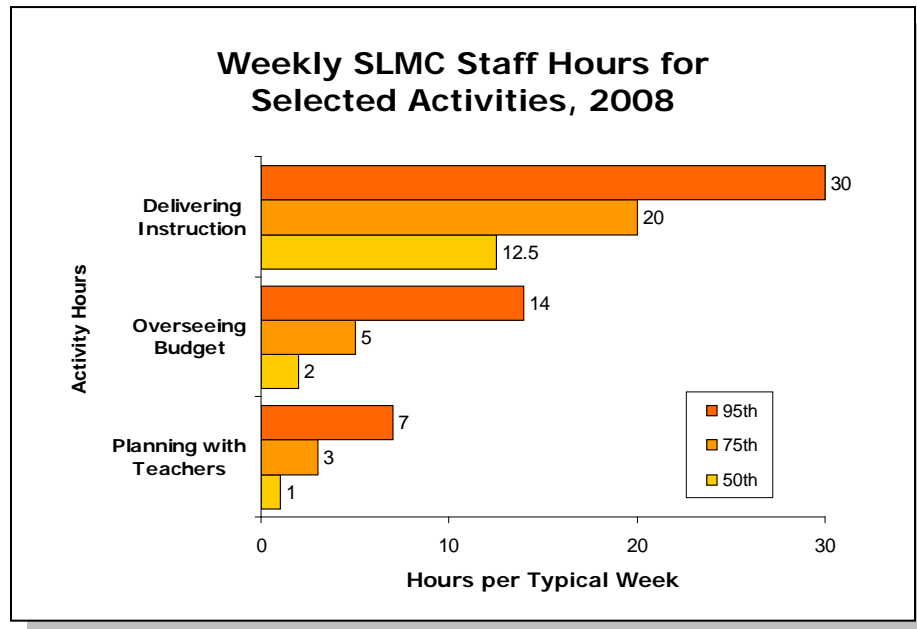
Three activities of school library media specialists are key to their roles as teachers, administrators, and instructional collaborators:

- Delivering instruction,
- Overseeing a budget, and
- Planning with teachers.

### Delivering Instruction

Of these three activities, not surprisingly, delivering instruction is the one that demands

the most time. At half of responding schools, SLMSs spend at least 12.5 hours per week—or, about two and a half hours per day—on this activity. The top quarter of schools reported 20 or more hours per week of instructional delivery—half of the time of a single full-time equivalent (FTE). The top five percent of schools reported that delivering instruction takes up at least 30 hours per week—three-quarters of a single FTE.



### Overseeing SLMP Budget

SLMP budget oversight requires at least two hours per week for half of responding schools, at least five hours for the top quarter of schools, and 14 hours or more per week for the top five percent of respondents.

### Planning with Teachers

For collaborative planning of instructional units with classroom teachers, responding SLMPs reported surprisingly low numbers of hours per week. Half of the respondents spend one hour per week or less on this important activity. The top quarter of schools reported three or more hours per week of collaborative planning—on average, a little more than a half hour per day—and the top five percent reported six or more hours for this activity—a little more than an hour a day. It is likely that two reasons above all others explain these figures. Many SLMSs have little or no support staff to cover the SLMC while they meet with teachers. Likewise, many SLMSs are in schools that do not embrace flexible scheduling of visits to the SLMC—very often because fixed schedules are utilized to provide solitary planning periods to teachers, while SLMSs and other SLMC staff are required to supervise students during those periods.

Several factors affect the amount of time devoted to these activities in participating schools:

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### School Level

#### *Delivering Instruction*

Typically, SLMS hours spent delivering instruction descend with grade level. Median weekly hours spent on this activity are 15 for elementary schools, 10 for middle schools, and eight for high schools. Similarly, though to a lesser degree, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles descend with grade level—24 hours per week for elementary schools, and 20 each for middle schools and high schools. Notably, however, the constraints of the clock limit the number of hours per week an SLMS can devote to instruction. At the middle and high school grade levels, the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile is 30 hours per week; at the elementary level it is 32 hour per week. In other words, regardless of grade level, only the top five percent of responding SLMPs have staffing levels required to spend 30-plus hours per week teaching, either alone or collaboratively.

#### *Overseeing Budget*

Predictably, based on the SLMS staff hours results stated earlier in the survey, an elementary school SLMS has less time to spend on budget oversight than her or his colleagues at middle and high school levels. Half of elementary SLMSs spend only two hours per week on this activity, and the top five percent at that grade level spend 10 or more hours per week. By contrast, half of SLMSs at other grade levels spend at least three hours per week on budget oversight, and the top five percent spend 15 to 16 or more hours per week. SLMSs at secondary schools are probably more likely to have any budgetary authority at all, and more likely to have support staff whose presence makes possible the division of labor that would permit spending more time on fiscal matters.

#### *Planning with Teachers*

Time spent on collaborative planning involving SLMSs and teachers is also higher for secondary levels than elementary level. Half of elementary SLMSs report spending less than one hour per week on planning, while half of middle and high school SLMSs report spending two or more hours on this activity. Among the top five percent of respondents at each grade level, however, the gaps are more dramatic—minimum weekly hours devoted to planning rise from five for elementary schools to eight and a half for middle schools to 10 for high schools.

### Enrollment

#### *Delivering Instruction*

Half of schools with enrollments of 1,000 and over report that the SLMS spends 10 or more hours per week delivering instruction. For schools with enrollments from 300 up to 1,000, half of SLMSs spend 14 or more hours per week teaching. For schools with smaller enrollments—those under 300—half of SLMSs spend eight or fewer hours per week on instruction. Enrollment does not appear to affect significantly SLMS instructional hours among the top quarter and top five percent of respondents. At every grade level, the 75<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles spend at or near 20 and 30 hours per week, respectively, on instruction, except in schools with enrollments over 2,000, where the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile is 35 hours.

#### *Overseeing Budget*

Weekly hours spent on budget oversight by SLMSs varies by school enrollment. For responding schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students, half of SLMSs spent three or more hours overseeing budgets. For schools with enrollments from 300 up to 1,000, that



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number of hours decreases to two; and, for schools with fewer than 300 students, it drops to one hour per week. The impact of school size on SLMP staffing and thus division of labor is quite obvious when comparing the top five percent of each enrollment cohort: At schools with 2,000 or more students, the top five percent of SLMSs spend 15 or more weekly hours on budget matters. At schools with enrollments under 500, the top five percent of SLMSs spend 10 or more hours on that activity.

### ***Planning with Teachers***

For weekly hours SLMSs spend planning with teachers, enrollment of 1,000 students is a critical point. At schools with that many or more students, half of SLMSs spend at least two to three weekly hours planning with teachers, the top quarter spend at least five hours collaborating, and the top five percent spend at least 10 hours. At schools with fewer than 1,000 students, these norms are about one, two to three, and five to six hours per week, respectively. In other words, once a school achieves an enrollment of at least 1,000, the average number of weekly SLMS hours devoted to planning tends to double. Quite likely, this relationship is explained by the fact that larger schools tend to have more hours of SLMS or support staffing, or both.

## **Region**

As with SLMP staffing levels—and quite likely because of them—SLMSs in the West tend to report fewer hours devoted to delivering instruction, overseeing budgets, and planning with teachers than their counterparts in other regions. Among western SLMSs, time spent on these activities averages 12.4 hours per week for instruction, 3.5 hours for budget, and 2 hours for planning. Their counterparts in the Northeast and the South tend to spend more time on all three activities (14.5 and 15.6 hours, respectively, on instruction; 3.4 and 4.2 hours, respectively, on budget; and about 2.3 hours on planning).

## **High-Poverty Schools**

At high-poverty schools, SLMSs tend to spend somewhat less time on planning with teachers than their counterparts at low-poverty schools. The differences are small—2.1 and 2.4 hours per week—but they are statistically significant. Notably, poverty status has no impact on SLMS hours spent on delivering instruction or overseeing budgets.

## **Metropolitan Schools**

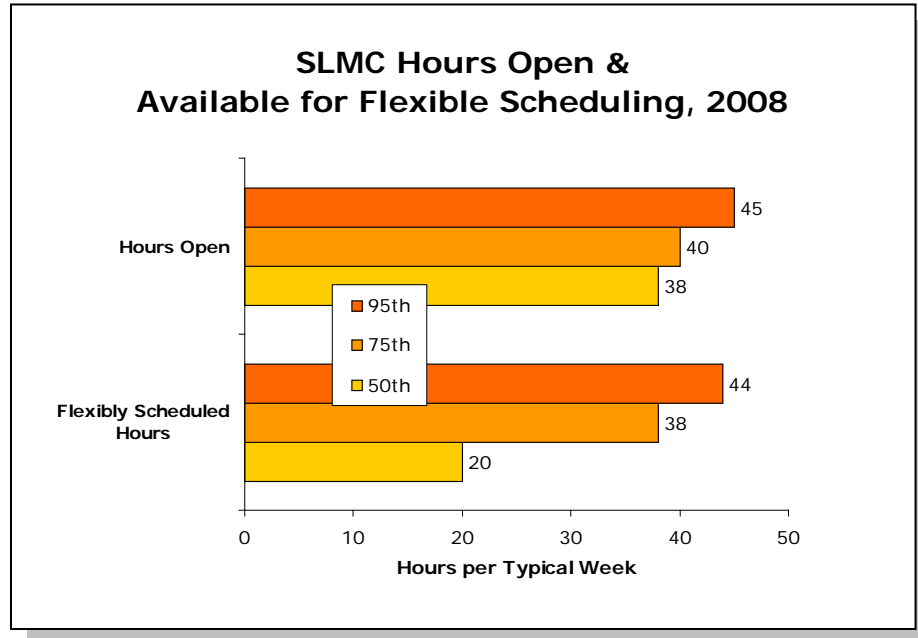
School locale has a similar impact on planning and instructional time of SLMSs. SLMSs in city and suburban schools in metropolitan areas tend to spend a little more time on these activities than their counterparts in outlying towns and rural areas. SLMSs in metropolitan areas average 14.9 weekly hours delivering instruction and 2.4 weekly hours planning with teachers, while their non-metro colleagues average only 12 hours on instruction and 2 hours on planning. Interestingly, at non-metro schools, SLMSs spend more weekly hours overseeing budgets (4.4) than their metro counterparts (3.8). As with findings about poverty and migrant status, these small differences are statistically significant.

## **Public and Private Schools**

SLMSs at public schools tend to spend more time, on average, delivering instruction (14 and 11 hours per week, respectively) and overseeing budgets (4 and 3 hours per week) than their private school colleagues.

## SLMC Hours Open & Available for Flexible Scheduling

A school library media center's scheduling indicates the extent to which it is available to students and teachers—both generally and especially as curricular needs arise. SLMCs to which class, group, and individual visits are welcome as curricular needs dictate are “flexibly scheduled.” The alternative—fixed scheduling—occurs when classes visit SLMCs on a regular schedule without regard to learning that is taking place.



Half of SLMCs for which a survey response was received are open at least 38 hours per week. The top quarter are open 40 hours per week, and the top five percent, 45 hours.

Half of responding SLMCs are available for flexible scheduling only 20 hours per week—slightly more than half the hours they are open. The top quarter are available for such scheduling 38 hours per week, and the top five percent, 44 hours—in both cases, almost all of the hours they are open.

Several factors affect SLMC hours open and available for flexible scheduling:

### School Level

As grade level increases, so do hours open per typical week. Half of elementary schools reported that their SLMCs are open 35 hours; half of middle schools, 38 hours; half of high schools, 40 hours. Median weekly SLMC hours available for flexible scheduling tend to be dramatically lower for elementary schools (8 hours) than for secondary schools (35 hours for middle schools, 37 hours for high schools).

### Enrollment

Total hours—both hours open and flexibly scheduled hours—are associated with enrollment size. Half of schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students are open at least 40 hours per week, 35 of which may be flexibly scheduled. Half of schools with enrollments of less than 700 are open at least 35 to 38 hours per week, 14 to 15 of which may be flexibly scheduled. Half of schools with enrollments from 700 up to 1,000 fall in-between with at least 38 hours open, at least 27 of which may be flexibly scheduled.

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### **Region**

Hours open and flexibly scheduled hours are not associated with region.

### **High-Poverty Schools**

Both the number of weekly hours a SLMC is open and the number of those hours available for flexible scheduling are associated with poverty status. High-poverty schools average 31 hours open per week, 19 flexibly scheduled, while low-poverty schools average 33 hours open, 23 flexibly scheduled.

### **Metropolitan Schools**

Similarly, flexibly scheduled hours are associated with metropolitan status. Perhaps surprisingly, however, responding non-metro schools average 22 such hours, compared with 20 hours for their metro counterparts.

### **Public and Private Schools**

Private schools average more SLMC hours open and available for flexible scheduling than public schools. Private schools are open an average of 37 hours per week, compared to 32 hours for public schools. Average hours available for flexible scheduling are 27 for private schools and 21 for public schools.

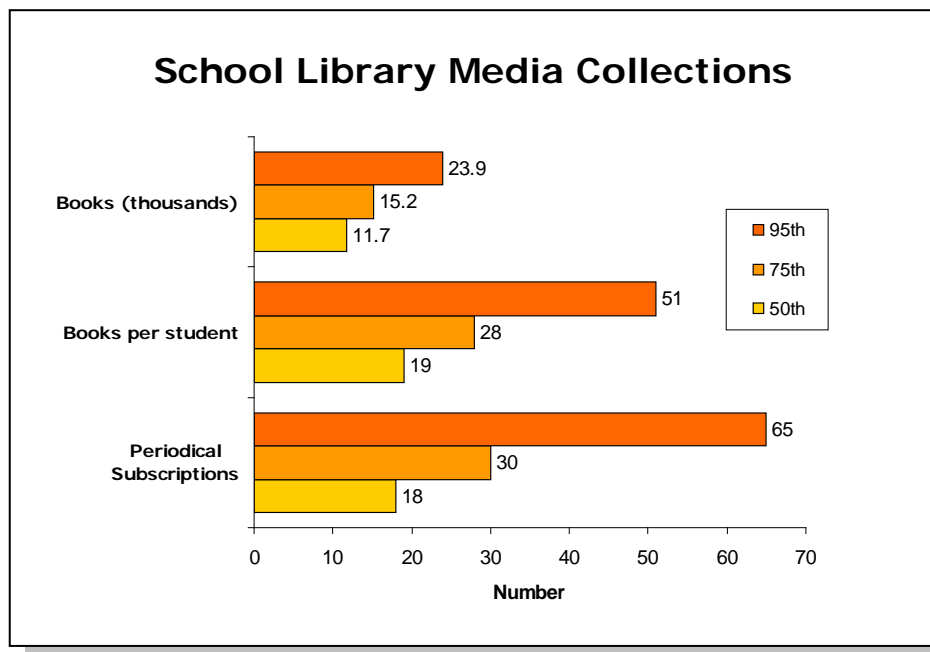
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### SLMP Collections

SLMP collections include materials in a wide variety of formats; but, two of the most important ones remain books and periodicals. For that reason, we use them as general indicators of the size of SLMP collections.

Half of responding schools reported collections of at least 11,700 books—or 19 volumes per student. The top quarter reported at least 15,200 volumes—or about 28 per student—and the top five percent, at least 23,900 volumes—and over 51 volumes per student.



Half of SLMPs reported 18 print subscriptions to periodicals. The top quarter reported at least 30 subscriptions, and the top five percent, at least 65 subscriptions.

Several factors affect the size of SLMP collections in participating schools:

### School Level

Both book and periodical collections increase, while books per student decrease, with school level. Half of elementary and middle schools reported collections of at least 11,000 and 11,500 volumes, respectively, but half of high schools reported owning at least 13,300 volumes. These differences are even more exaggerated for the top five percent of each school level: at least 20,000 volumes for both elementary and middle schools, and over 29,000 volumes for high schools. Conversely, half of elementary schools reported at least 23 books per student, compared with 17 and 12, respectively, for middle and high schools. Similarly, the top five percent of elementary schools reported at least 53 books per student, while middle and high schools reported 39 and 37, respectively.

### Enrollment

Predictably, the median size of book and periodical collections tends to grow steadily with enrollment. Half of schools with enrollments of 2,000 and over reported at least 20,000 volumes and 34 subscriptions, while half of schools with enrollments under 300 reported at least 7,600 volumes and 11 subscriptions. The gap is even wider for the top five percent of each enrollment range. Those with enrollments of 2,000 and over reported at least 40,000 volumes and 90 subscriptions, while those with enrollments under 300 reported over 16,000 volumes and 45 subscriptions.

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### **Region**

While the West stood out as the lowest staffed region, regional differences regarding collections are more mixed. The Midwest and South report smaller average book collections—about 12,400 each—while the Northeast and West report larger average collections—about 13,400 and about 13,100, respectively. On a per-student basis, however, the Midwest averages the largest per student collections at 27 books per student. The Northeast averages 25 books per student, while the West and the South come in last at 22 and 14 books per student, respectively.

Periodical collection size also varies among regions. SLMPs in the Northeast average 30 subscriptions, while those in the South average 23. SLMPs in the Midwest and West average 27 and 16 subscriptions, respectively.

### **High-Poverty Schools**

Not surprisingly, schools with more poor students tend to have smaller book and periodical collections, but the opposite is true for books per student. High-poverty schools average fewer total books, about 11,650, versus about 13,400 for less poor schools, but just a slightly higher average number of books per student (23 versus 22). As with total book collections, high-poverty schools average fewer subscriptions (19) than low-poverty schools (27).

### **Metropolitan Schools**

Like migrant status, metropolitan status has a mixed relationship to collection size. SLMPs in cities and suburbs average about 13,100 volumes, compared with only about 11,300 volumes for SLMPs in outlying towns and rural areas. But non-metro areas lead metro areas on average books per student (26 versus 20). This seemingly contradictory finding probably indicates an economy of scale for metro area SLMPs. Non-metro schools also average more periodical subscriptions (25) than metro schools (22).

### **Public and Private Schools**

Private schools consistently best public schools on collection size. Private schools average more than 15,300 volumes—36 per student—and 35 subscriptions, compared to about 12,400 volumes—22 per student—and 23 subscriptions for public schools.

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### Average Copyright

Half of responding schools reported average copyright years for health and medicine information of 1995. The top quarter reported average copyrights of 1999, and the top five percent, 2002.

From information published in 1995—13 years ago—a student would not learn about the cloning of Dolly the sheep (in 1997).

From a book copyrighted 1999—ten years ago—a student would not learn about the first successful isolation of human stem cell lines (first reported in November 1998).

From a work with a 2002 copyright—six years ago—a student would not learn of the completion of the Human Genome Project (2005).

Several factors affect the age of library collections in participating schools:

### School Level

Average health and medicine copyright years vary somewhat by grade level. While 1995 is the average across all grade levels, responding middle schools averaged 1996.

### Enrollment

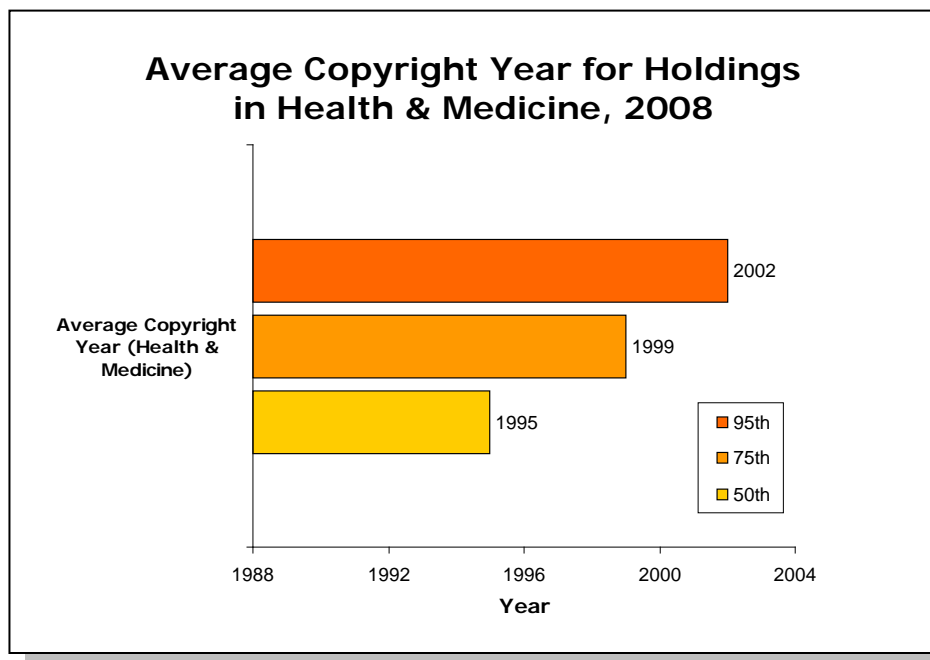
Responding schools with the largest and smallest enrollments suggest that size has some association with collection age. Schools with 2,000 or more students averaged 1996, while those with fewer than 300 students averaged 1994.

### Region

There is a statistically significant difference in collection age for responding schools from the Northeast (average health and medicine copyright year of 1993).

### High-Poverty Schools

Poverty status is not associated with average health and medicine copyright year.



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### **Metropolitan Schools**

Schools in cities and suburbs average health and medicine copyright years of 1994, while those in outlying towns and rural areas average 1993.

### **Public and Private Schools**

There is a one-year difference in average health and medicine copyright year for public (1994) and private (1993) schools; but, it is a statistically significant one.

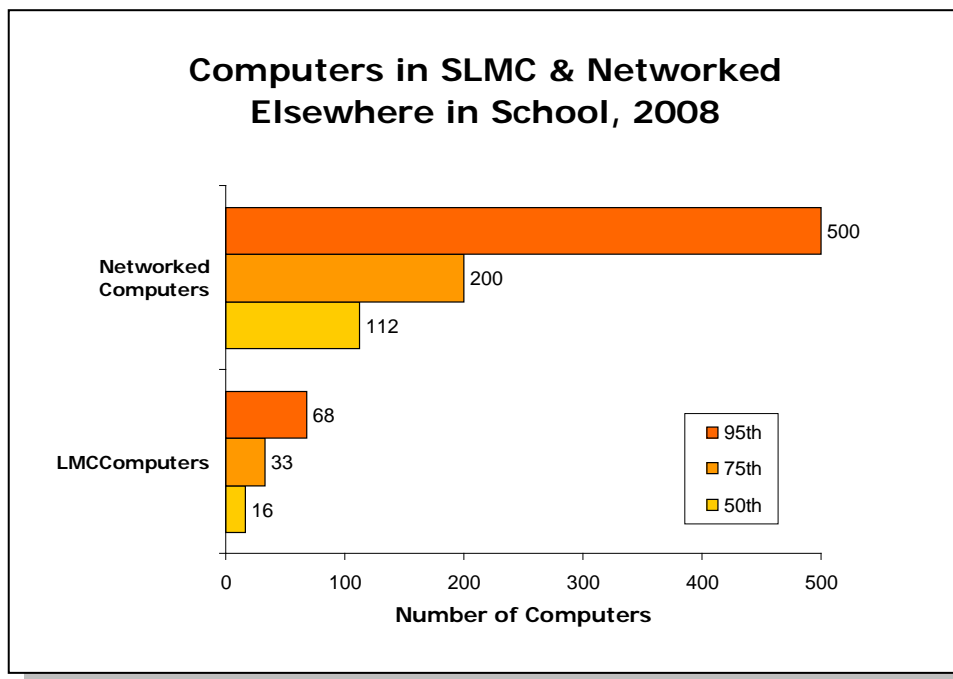
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### SLMC & Networked Computers

Over the past decade or so, school library media programs have been revolutionized by technology. Internet-capable computers, both in the SLMC and throughout the school, are networked together to provide access to library catalogs, licensed databases, and the vast information resources on the World Wide Web. These online resources extend the reach of the SLMP beyond the SLMC's

walls into every classroom, lab, and office in the school. And, in many cases, remote access allows students and teachers to access these resources from home.



Half of responding schools report at least 16 computers in the SLMC and at least another 112 elsewhere in the school. The top quarter of respondents have at least 33 SLMC computers and another 200 elsewhere in the school, while the top five percent have at least 68 SLMC computers and another 500 elsewhere in the school.

### School Level

The numbers of computers of both types tend to rise dramatically with grade level. Half of elementary SLMCs have fewer than ten computers; half of middle school SLMCs have at least 22, and half of high school SLMCs have at least 34. Among the top five percent of each grade level, the differences are even more extreme: 39, 71, and 94 SLMC computers, respectively, for elementary, middle, and high schools in that group.

Similar patterns exist for networked computers elsewhere in the school. Half of elementary schools report at least 85; half of middle schools report at least 149, and half of high schools, at least 200. Among the top five percent of each grade level, differences are more dramatic: 244, 405, and 860 computers, respectively, for elementary, middle, and high schools in that group.

### Enrollment

Numbers of SLMC and networked computers tend to increase steadily with enrollment. Half of the largest schools, those with 2,000 or more students, report at least 45 SLMC computers and at least 500 networked computers. The top five percent of that enrollment range report at least 119 SLMC computers and at least 1,634 networked computers. By contrast, half of the smallest schools, those with fewer than 300 students, report fewer than



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eight SLMC computers and fewer than 50 networked ones. The top five percent of this enrollment range report at least 40 SLMC computers and at least 200 networked ones.

### **Region**

There are some significant regional differences in reported numbers of library and networked school computers. Responding schools from the Midwest reported an average of 27 library computers to the South's 22. But when comparing networked computers the West comes in lowest averaging 152 with Southern schools reporting an average of 188.

### **High-Poverty Schools**

High-poverty schools average fewer computers of both types—20 SLMC computers and 147 networked computers—than low-poverty schools, which report 28 SLMC computers and 190 networked ones.

### **Metropolitan Schools**

Schools in cities and suburbs average more computers of both types—25 in the SLMC, 184 elsewhere—than schools in outlying towns and rural areas—22 in the SLMC, 138 elsewhere.

### **Public and Private Schools**

Private schools tend to have fewer SLMC computers than do public schools: 20 versus 24 for SLMC computers. There is no significant difference in networked computers located elsewhere in the school between public and private schools.

## Remote Database Access

Online databases are becoming a ubiquitous feature of school library media programs. Less common is remote database access that enables students and teachers to use online resources from home or elsewhere. Almost three quarters of survey respondents reported offering remote access.

Several factors affect the availability of remote database access from a school.

### School Level

The availability of remote database access rises with grade level – 68.7 percent of elementary schools, 77.6 percent of middle schools, and 84.1 percent of high schools.

### Enrollment

The larger a school's enrollment, the more likely it provides remote database access. Of schools with enrollments of 2,000 or more, more than nine out of ten provide it. Of those with 500 to 699 students, more than seven out of ten provide it. And of those with fewer than 300 students, only six out of ten provide it.

### Region

Significant regional difference associated with remote database access were found for the South (the lowest region at 72%) and the Midwest (the highest region at 77%).

### High-Poverty Schools

Of responding low-poverty schools, almost eight out of ten provide remote database access, compared to seven out of ten high-poverty schools.

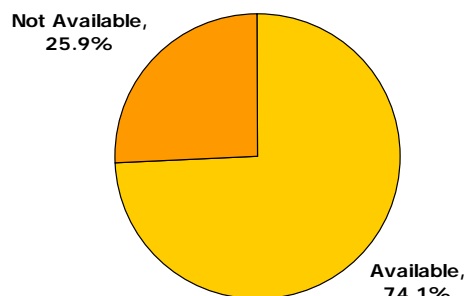
### Metropolitan Schools

Remote database access is available from almost eight out of ten in metropolitan areas (cities and suburbs) and between six and seven out of ten schools in non-metropolitan areas (towns, rural areas).

### Public and Private Schools

Remote database access is not associated with a school's public-private status.

**SLMCs Offering Remote Database Access, 2008**



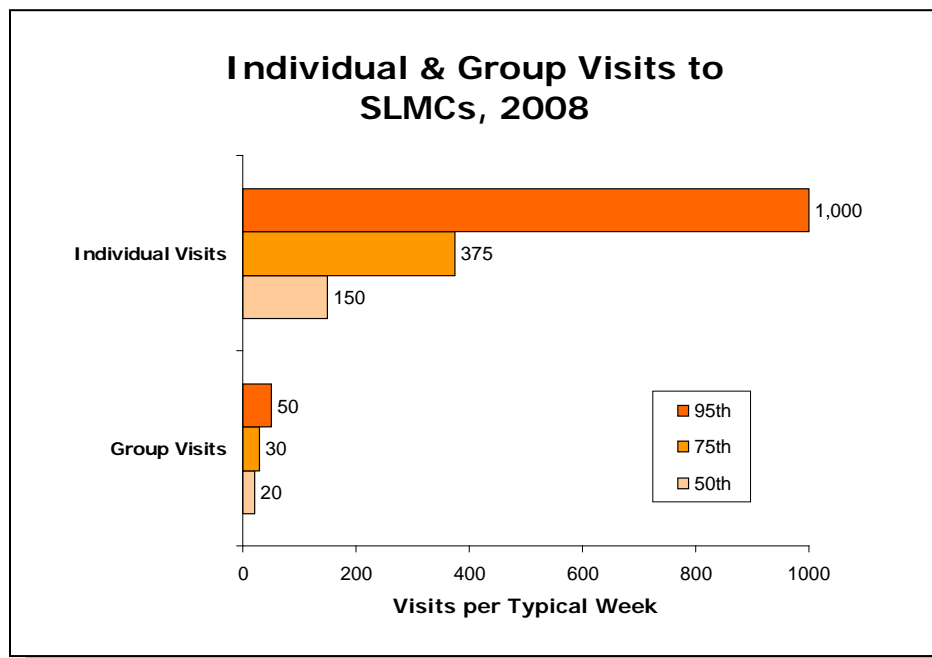
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# Individual & Group Visits to SLMCs

Despite the ability to use SLMC resources remotely via computer, visits to SLMCs remain an important indicator of a library media program's activity.

Sometimes whole classes visit the SLMC; at other times, smaller groups of students and, perhaps, a teacher or teacher's aide. Especially in schools with flexibly scheduled SLMCs, individual visits result from specific assignments or other instructional needs.



Half of responding schools report that at least 20 classes or other groups and 150 individuals visit their SLMCs during a typical week. The top quarter of respondents report at least 30 group and at least 375 individual visits, and the top five percent, at least 50 group and at least 1,000 individual visits.

## School Level

Because elementary school SLMCs are much less likely to be flexibly scheduled than their secondary counterparts, half of elementary respondents report fewer than 60 individual visits, but at least 23 group visits, during a typical week. At the same time, half of middle and high schools report at least 215 and 300 individual visits, respectively, but fewer than 20 group visits. The top five percent of high schools report by far the highest numbers of visits of both types—at least 75 group visits and 1,800 individual visits per week.

## Enrollment

Unsurprisingly, individual SLMC visits tend to rise steadily with enrollment; but, this factor has a far less dramatic impact on group visits. Half of responding schools with 2,000 or more students report at least 700 individual visits per week, and the top five percent of that group, a minimum of almost 2,750 such visits. By contrast, for all enrollment ranges above 300 students, half of respondents report 20 to 27 group visits per week, though half of those with fewer than 300 students report fewer than 13 such visits. Nonetheless, among the top five percent of each enrollment range, group visits tend to increase consistently with enrollment. Respondents in that group with enrollments of 2,000 or more students report at least 119 group visits per week, while those with fewer than 300 students report a minimum of only 30 such visits.

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### **Region**

Individual visits to SLMCs are significantly lower for respondents from the Midwest (261 per week) compared to their counterparts from the Northeast (340) and Midwest (358).

### **High-Poverty Schools**

High poverty schools average 237 individual visits per week, compared to 357 for low-poverty schools. The difference between low- and high-poverty schools on average SLMC group visits is in approximately the same ratio, 25 to 31 visits per week.

### **Metropolitan Schools**

SLMCs in cities and suburbs average 314 individual and 30 group visits per week, compared to 264 individual and 24 group visits for SLMCs in outlying towns and rural areas.

### **Public and Private Schools**

Public schools average 28 group visits per week, versus 19 for private schools. There is no significant relationship between public-private status and individual visits.

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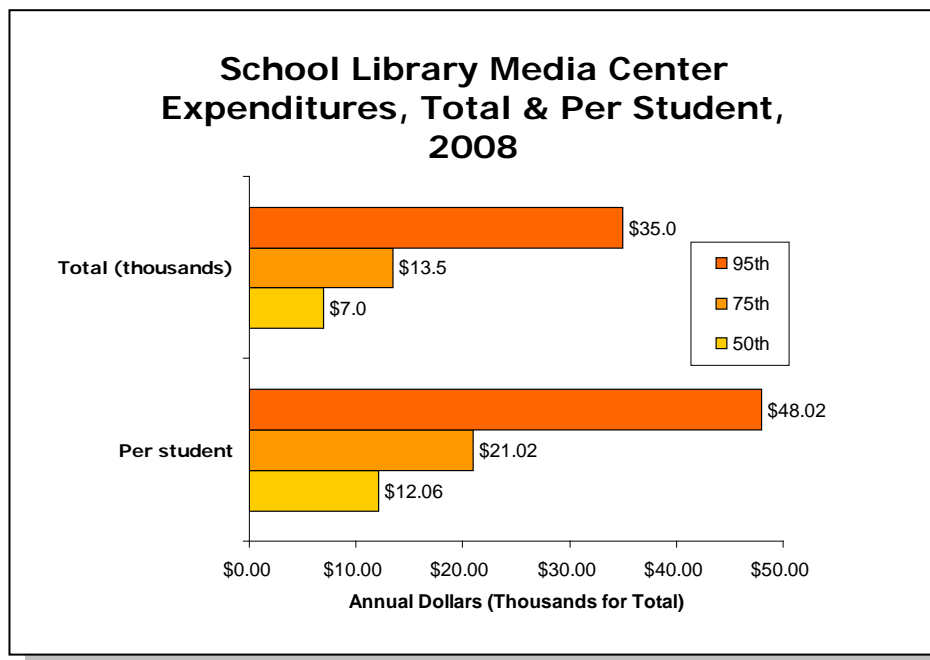
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# Library Media Expenditures

The budgets of most school library media programs cover expenditures on information resources (e.g., books, audio and video formats, periodical and database subscriptions) and operating costs. (Expenditures on salaries, wages, and employee benefits are part of the overall school or district payroll.)

Half of responding schools report spending at least

\$7,000 annually—or \$12.06 per student—on their LM programs. The top quarter spend \$13,500—or \$21.02—and the top five percent, \$35,000—or \$48.02.



The per-student median, \$12.06, is only two-thirds of the cost of a single work of fiction (\$17.63, according to the March 1, 2008 issue of *School Library Journal*) and about a third of the cost of a single non-fiction title (\$27.04). The 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, \$48.02, would not quite cover the cost of a second non-fiction volume.

## School Level

Proportionally, there are greater grade-level gaps in total LM expenditures than in expenditures per student. Total expenditures tend to increase with school level. Half of elementary SLMPs spend \$5,000 annually; half of middle schools, \$8,000; and half of high schools, \$13,000. But median per-student spending is comparable from one grade level to the next, differing by less than a dollar. Among the top five percent of respondents at each grade level, gaps in total spending are more pronounced—at least \$17,000 for elementary schools, at least \$27,000 for middle schools, and at least \$52,000 for high schools. Among that same cohort, elementary and middle school spending per student is at least \$39, while, for high schools, it exceeds \$52.

## Enrollment

Predictably, total LM expenditures tend to rise steadily with enrollment, while per-student spending tends to decrease. Half of schools with 2,000 or more students spend at least \$21,800 annually, while half of those with fewer than 300 students spend less than \$3,500. Among the top five percent of each enrollment range, the differences are even more dramatic. Schools in that cohort with 2,000 or more students spend at least \$70,000, while spending for those with fewer than 300 students is less than \$15,000. Differences in median expenditures per student suggest an economy of scale for larger SLMPs. For half of

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responding schools with 2,000 or more students, this figure is \$9.00, while for half of respondents with fewer than 300 students, it is almost \$18.00 per student. The 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles for these two enrollment ranges further dramatize this point—more than \$23.54 and more than \$84.86 per student, respectively.

### **Region**

Responding SLMPs from the Northeast average the highest total and per-student expenditures at almost \$14,000 and almost \$22, respectively. Respondents from the West average the lowest figures in the same categories—less than \$9,300 and \$14, respectively.

### **High-Poverty Schools**

Compared with SLMPs at low-poverty schools, those in high-poverty schools spend less, on average, both in total (less than \$8,604 versus more than \$12,254, respectively) and per student (\$14.59 versus \$16.64).

### **Metropolitan Schools**

Mirroring the association of enrollment with spending measures, schools in cities and suburbs spend somewhat more on average than their counterparts in outlying towns and suburbs in total (about \$11,100 versus about \$9,200, respectively), though not on a per student basis, where the relationship is reversed (\$14.36 versus \$18.44).

### **Public and Private Schools**

Unsurprisingly, private schools tend to spend more on their LM programs than public schools, both total and per-student. Private schools average more than \$16,700 annually—or \$34.13 per student—while public schools average less than \$11,000 annually—or \$16.33 per student.

# 2008 Question: Social Networking

The 2008 School Libraries Count survey introduces a new category of questions. The core of the survey is approximately 20 basic statistical questions that measure the status of library media programs quantitatively. Those core questions will be asked each year of the survey. Starting in 2008, there will be a multiple-choice question or questions whose responses will enable AASL to address one of the timely issues facing school library media programs. This year, that issue is social networking. Respondents to this year's questions on this topic totaled 5,170 (74% of the 6,998 overall respondents).

A social network is an online community of people who share interests and activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. This phenomenon encompasses a wide variety of types, ranging from:

- Virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), schools, and courses to
- Existing "brand name" sites (e.g., My Space, Facebook) and user-created ones (e.g., Nings) to
- Collaborative tools (e.g., wikis like the Wikipedia, editors like Google Documents, social libraries like Library Thing) to
- A variety of modes of communication (e.g., podcasts, blogs, forums or bulletin boards, chat, texting, instant messaging).

Notably, some may regard this list to be rather broadly inclusive of tools that they might or might not consider within the realm of social networking. A more inclusive interpretation of the term was adopted deliberately, thereby including some tools that one might otherwise associate with the broad concepts of Web 2.0 and mobile communication.

As these wide-ranging technologies have become more common—indeed, in some cases, ubiquitous—school library media specialists, classroom teachers, and other school leaders have begun to embrace them—at least, some of them—as educational tools. In some cases, however, district or school authorities have acted to prohibit the use of these technologies in schools. When referring to "social networking support" in this survey, the word "support" infers working with students (alone or in collaboration with classroom teachers) on units of instruction using social networking tools. The tools can be used alone by the SLMS in planning instruction, or with the teacher and/or student in delivery of instruction to classify as "support."

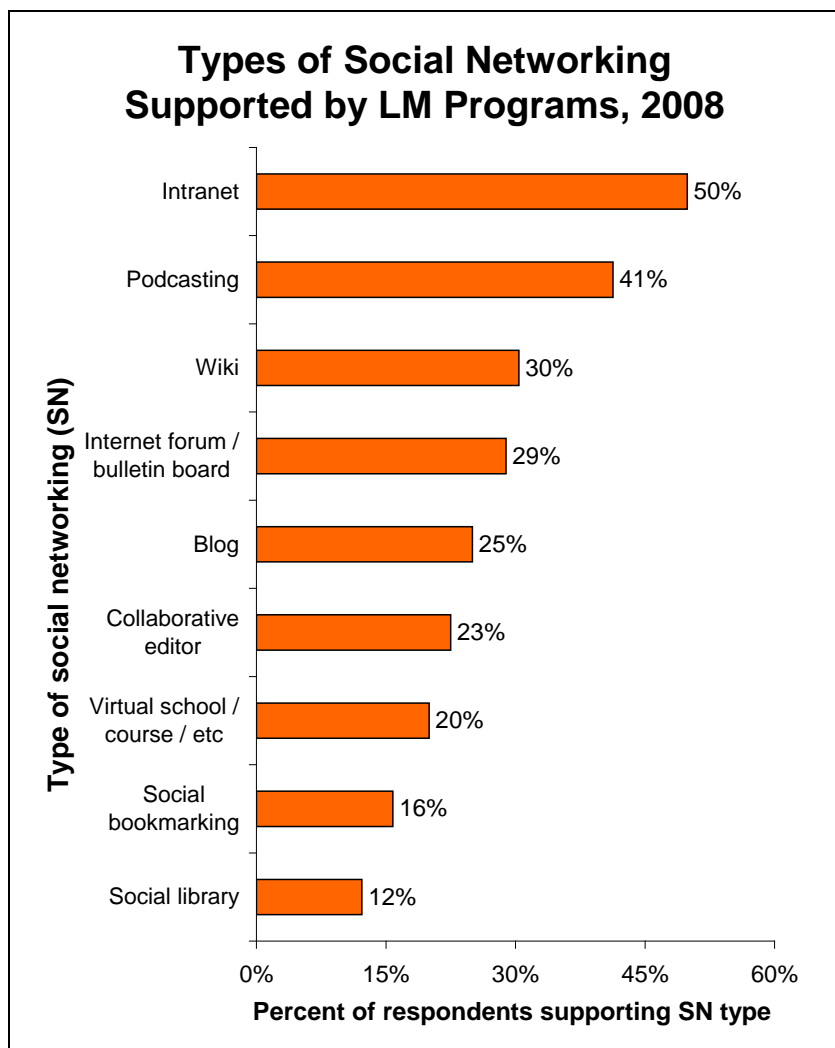
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### Social Networking Types Supported by Library Media Programs

Several social networking options are beginning to receive instructional support within school library media programs (see chart at right):

- Half (50%) of responding library media programs reported supporting intranets.
- Two out of five (41%) support podcasting.
- Three out of ten support wikis (30%) and Internet forums or bulletin boards (29%).
- One in four supports blogs (25%) or collaborative editors (23%).
- One in five supports a virtual school, course, or instructional unit.
- One in six supports the use of social bookmarking sites (e.g., del.icio.us).
- And, one in eight supports the use of social library sites (e.g., Library Thing).





## School Libraries Count!

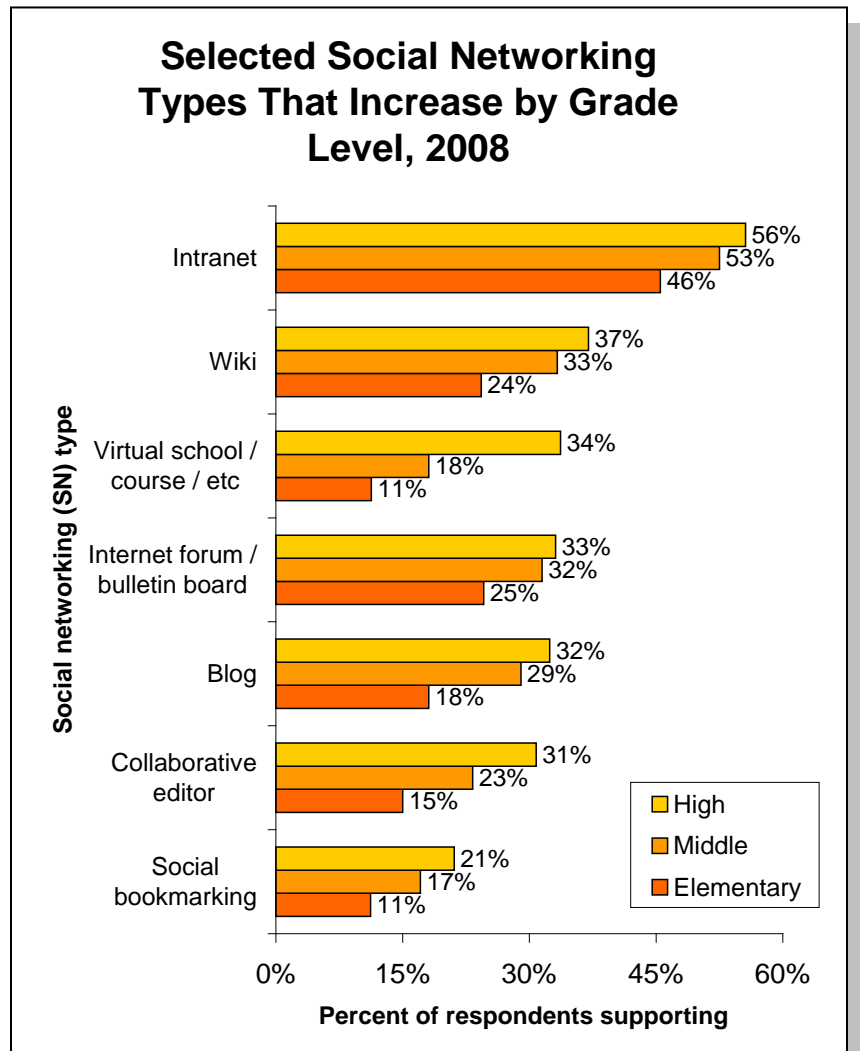
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### Social Networking Types Associated with School Level

Instructional use and library media support of most of these options increases steadily with school level. (See chart at right.)

Middle and high schools are somewhat likelier to support certain social networking options, such as intranets, wikis, and Internet forums/bulletin boards. But, high schools are two to three times more likely than elementary schools to support other alternatives, such as blogs, collaborative editors, virtual schools or courses, and social bookmarking.

Interestingly, several elementary school respondents questioned the relevance of most or all of the social networking options to their grade level. But, as the data indicate, it is by no means unheard-of for elementary school library media specialists and their classroom teacher colleagues to introduce their young students to many of these social networking tools.



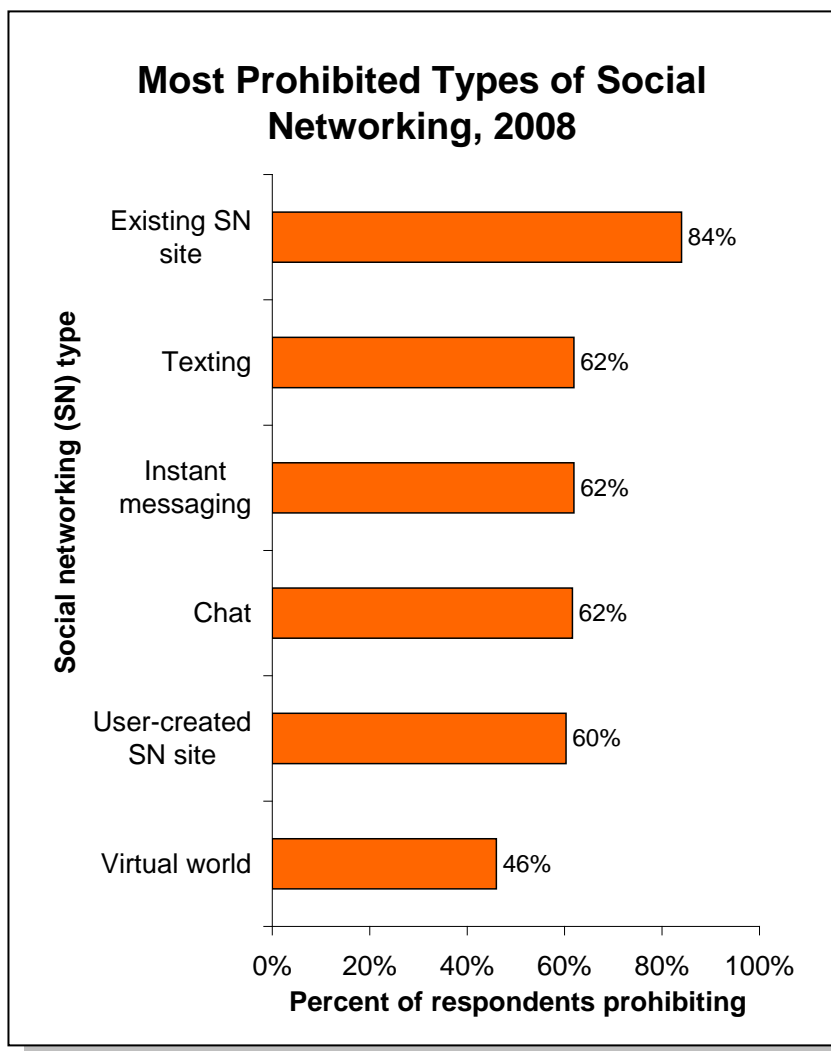
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### Most Prohibited Social Networking Types

The remainder of the social networking types are prohibited by a majority (sometimes a vast majority, sometimes a near one) of responding schools. (Such prohibitions may be a matter of either school or district policy.) These prohibited social networking types include: existing social networking sites (84%); instant messaging, texting, and chat (all 62%), user-created social networking sites (60%), and virtual worlds (46%).

Comparing the more popular types of social networking with these, certain distinctions between them seem likely. The types most likely to be prohibited by district or school policy are also ones that many perceive to be less useful for educational purposes and/or sites that may make students vulnerable to online predators. Existing social networking sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, could be used—and certainly are used by a few—for educational purposes; but, accurately or inaccurately, the popular perception is likely to be that they are distractions. This perception probably applies even more strongly to communications, such as chat, texting, and instant messaging. On the other hand, intranets, podcasting, wikis, blogs, and the like are more readily adaptable to educational purposes.



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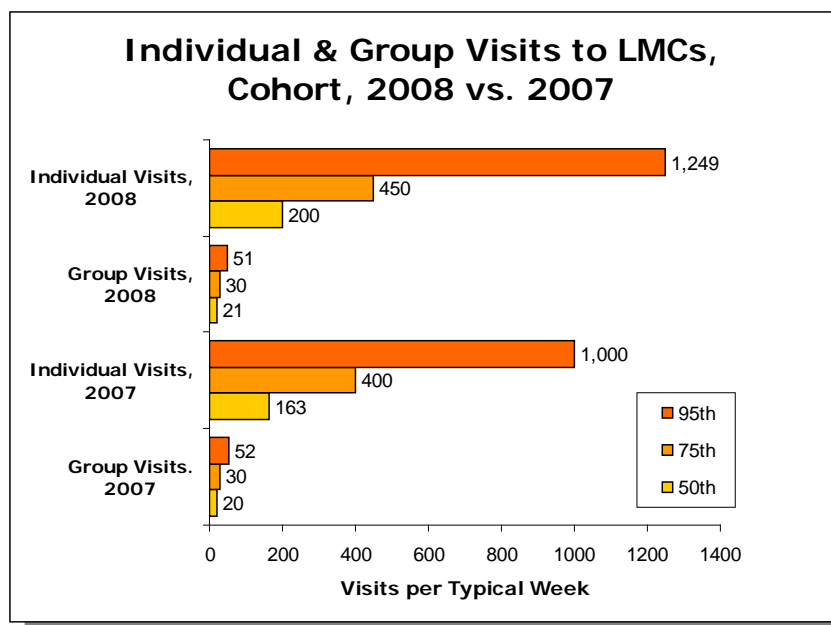
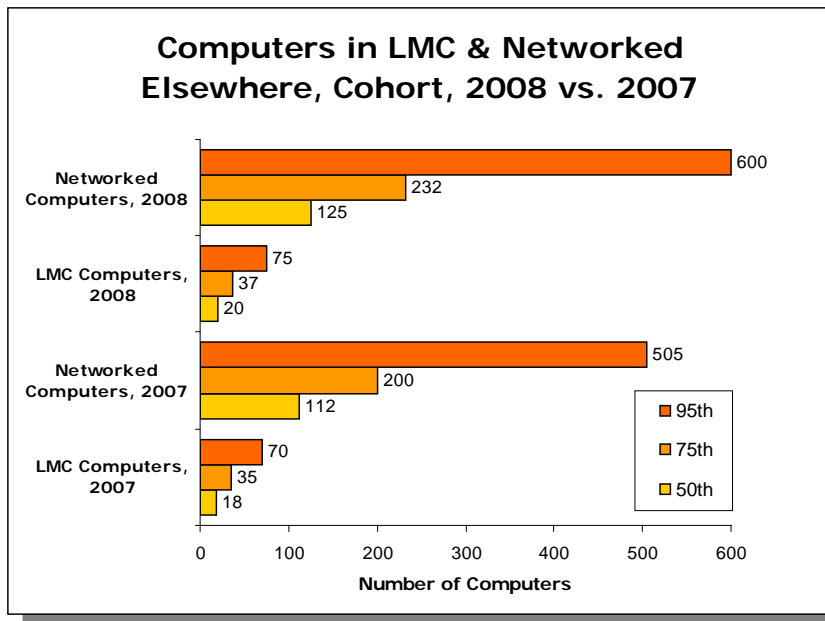
### Part II. Cohort Results

The 2008 survey received 6,998 responses. The results calculated from these responses are presented above in Part I. Among these 6,998 were 1,325 responses from school library media programs (SLMPs) that had also responded to the 2007 survey. Part II summarizes similarities and differences between 2007 and 2008 data received from these same 1,325 respondents, referred to here as the “cohort”.

There were no significant year to year differences in the cohort responses for three of the nine variables: SLMP and Total SLMP Hours, Weekly SLMP Staff Hours for Selected Activities, and SLMP Hours Open and Available for Flexible Scheduling.

For Library Media Center Collections, data are virtually the same for both years except for total number of books at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, which decreased by 5% from 2007 to 2008 (from 26,094 to 24,784).

The average Copyright Year for Health and Medicine books increased by one year.



The chart above illustrates that numbers of computers in SLMPs and elsewhere in the school, increased at all percentiles, including an 18.8 percent increase at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for networked computers.

Percentiles for group visits changed little from year to year for the cohort. But, individual visits to SLMPs increased significantly: up 22.7 percent for the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, up 12.5 percent for the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, and up almost 25 percent for the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.